

## **ACTFL CERTIFIED PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM: ORAL AND WRITING PROFICIENCY TESTING FOR VIRGINIA PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS**

### **THE ACTFL ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW**

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, or ACTFL OPI, is:

- a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability;
- a telephonic interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee;
- a criterion referenced test that compares an individual's performance of specific oral communication tasks with the criteria of each of ten proficiency levels described in the ACTFL Proficiency-Guidelines-Speaking (Revised 1999).

The ACTFL OPI takes the form of a carefully structured conversation between a trained and certified interviewer and the person whose speaking proficiency is being assessed. The interview is interactive and continuously adapts to the speaking ability of the individual being tested. There is no script or prescribed set of question; the topics discussed during the interview are based on the interests and experiences of the speaker.

Through a series of personalized questions, the interviewer elicits from the test candidate examples of his or her ability to handle the communication tasks specified for each level of proficiency in order to establish a clear "floor" and "ceiling" of consistent functional ability. Often candidates are asked to take part in a role-play to prove linguistic functions not easily elicited through the conversational format.

Since the ACTFL OPI is an assessment of functional speaking ability, independent of any specific curriculum, it is irrelevant when, where, why, and under what conditions the candidate acquired his/her speaking ability in the language.

The interview lasts from ten to thirty minutes. Each interview is tape recorded and assigned an initial rating by the tester. The interview is then blindly rated by a second certified tester. Under the supervision of the ACTFL Testing Office, Language Testing International, a final rating is assigned and an ACTFL OPI Certificate is issued.

### **THE ACTFL WRITING PROFICIENCY TEST**

The ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test, or ACTFL WPT is:

- a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional writing ability;
- a test that requires the examinee to read prompts in English and compose written responses in the target language without the aid of dictionaries or grammar references;
- a criterion referenced test that compares an individual's performance of specific communication tasks with the criteria for each of ten proficiency levels described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Writing* revised by ACTFL in 2001

The ACTFL WPT takes the form of a carefully constructed assessment with four requests for written responses dealing with practical, social, and professional topics that are encountered in informal and formal contexts. The writer is presented with tasks and contexts that represent the range of proficiency levels from Novice to Superior on the ACTFL scale. The tasks and prompts are articulated in English with the expectation that the responses be written in the target language. The prompts ask for written constructed responses of paragraph length or longer demonstrating narrative writing, informative writing and persuasive writing.

Since the ACTFL WPT is an assessment of functional writing ability independent of any specific curriculum, it is irrelevant when, where, why, and under what conditions the candidate acquired his/her writing ability in the language.

The examinee is given 90 minutes to read the directions and complete the test. A completed WPT is reviewed by an ACTFL certified testers to assign the ACTFL proficiency rating that best describes the proficiency demonstrated by the individual. The test is then forwarded to another ACTFL certified tester for a second independent (“blind”) rating for final rating confirmation.

## THE ACTFL CERTIFIED TESTERS

ACTFL OPIs are conducted and rated by ACTFL certified proficiency testers. ACTFL WPTs also are rated by ACTFL certified raters. These testers and raters are highly specialized language professionals who have completed a rigorous training process that concludes with a tester’s demonstrated ability to consistently elicit ratable samples and to rate samples with a high degree of reliability. ACTFL strictly monitors all testing and rating.

## ACTFL ASSESSMENT IN 36 LANGUAGES

As of the printing of this brochure, ACTFL provides certified oral proficiency testing in the 36 languages listed below. The ACTFL writing proficiency test is offered in the 8 languages that are highlighted.

Albanian	Haitian Creole	<b>Russian</b>
<b>Arabic</b>	Hebrew	Serbian
Cambodian	Hindi	Slovak
Cantonese	Hmong	<b>Spanish</b>
<b>Chinese*</b>	Indonesian	Swahili
Croatian	<b>Italian</b>	Swedish
Czech	<b>Japanese*</b>	Tagalog
Dutch	Korean	Thai
Egyptian	Lao	Ukrainian
English	Mandarin	Urdu
Farsi	Norwegian	Vietnamese
<b>French</b>	Polish	
<b>German</b>	Portuguese	
Greek	Punjabi	

\* Chinese and Japanese WPTs will be available in the Fall of 2004

## FEES FOR INDIVIDUAL OPI

Individual Certified ACTFL OPI	\$129.00
Individual Certified ACTFL WPT	\$ 50.00
Combination OPI and WPT	\$160.00
Rescheduling Fee	\$ 25.00
Missed OPI appointment/No Show	\$ 55.00
Express Processing Service	\$ 50.00

Payment may be made by credit card authorization (MasterCard ,Visa of Discover Card), money order, or personal check. Payment must accompany application form(s).

## SCHEDULING AN ACTFL OPI

### Step 1. *Complete an Application Form*

Use an ACTFL Proficiency Assessment Application Form for Virginia Teachers.

### Step 2. *Telephonic OPI*

Telephonic OPI- requires the presence of a designated **Proctor** who:

- Completes and signs a Proctor agreement form;
- Places the call\* to the OPI Tester;
- Introduces the test candidate to the OPI Tester;
- Confirms the name and identity of the examinee, and
- Is free to leave after introduction

The examinee must identify someone who is willing to act as **Proctor**. The **Proctor** must be someone who works in an official capacity at a school or school district office. This includes Principals, Department Chairs, Administrative Secretaries, Personnel Office Staff, etc.

*\*If a long distance call cannot be placed from the Proctor's office telephone, the test candidate should bring a phone card to use in order to place and charge the phone call.*

### Step 3. *Submit Application*

Submit a completed application; include check, money order, or credit card authorization, as well as the Proctor Form signed by your proctor. No application will be accepted without full payment.

### Step 4. *Wait for notification of OPI Appointment.*

The examinee will be notified within 72 hours from receipt of application and payment by e-mail or telephone of the OPI date and time. The Proctor also will be notified of the OPI date, time and telephone number by FAX.

### Step 5. *Confirm Appointment*

Finalize appointment arrangement with Proctor. Confirm appointment with LTI by replying to the e-mail or phone message.

### **Rescheduled or missed OPI Appointments**

In the event that an appointment needs to be rescheduled: Contact the LTI Test Coordinator immediately (800-486-8444 extension 14). There is no charge for appointments that are rescheduled prior to one day before the scheduled appointment. For appointments that are rescheduled within the hour, there is a \$25.00 rescheduling fee. For missed appointments there is a \$55.00 no-show fee.

## NOTIFICATION OF OPI RESULTS

Results of ACTFL proficiency assessments are communicated to the test candidate through the printing and mailing of ACTFL Proficiency Certificates two to four weeks after the date of the test. (Each certificate, OPI and WPT, will come in separate mailings.) The Virginia Department of Education will receive the candidate's test results via an electronic report. Please include a copy of your ACTFL Proficiency Certificates when submitting your credentials to the Virginia Department of Education. Each test becomes a permanent record in the ACTFL Test Archive. Official copies of the certificate may be requested at any time by submitting the Request for Official Copy of an ACTFL Rating Certificate with a payment of \$10.00 per copy.

## ACE College Credit Recommendation for ACTFL OPI Ratings

The American Council on Education (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service has established college credit recommendations for Official ACTFL OPI ratings. For more information on ACE credit recommendations, visit the ACE Website at [www.acenet.edu/calec/corporate](http://www.acenet.edu/calec/corporate)

## SCHEDULING AN ACTFL WPT

### STEP 1. *Complete an Application Form*

Use an ACTFL Proficiency Assessment Application Form or apply online for “Virginia Teachers”.

### STEP 2. *Indicate the school or university where you will take the test*

To take the WPT from a school requires the presence of a designated **Proctor\*** who will

- Complete Proctor Form.
- Follow test proctor instructions for either internet or booklet administration of the test.
- Confirm the identity of the candidate by checking picture ID on the test date. Place the candidate at a quiet computer terminal with Internet access. (Internet testing available in French, German and Spanish only. Other languages are available in test booklet form.)
- Proctor the test for the 90-minute duration of the test.

\*The examinee must identify someone who is willing to act as **Proctor**. The **Proctor** must be someone who works in an official capacity at a school or school district office. This includes Principals, Deans, Department Chairs, Administrative Secretaries and Personnel Office Staff, etc.

### STEP 3. *Submit Application.*

Submit a completed application form; include check, money order, or credit card authorization, as well as a signed WPT Proctor form for either the Internet version in French, German, and Spanish or booklet version in all other languages. No application will be accepted without full payment.

### STEP 4. *Wait for notification a WPT assignment*

The examinee will be contacted within 72 hours from receipt of application and payment by e-mail or telephone that a WPT has been assigned to him or her. The Proctor also will be notified that a WPT has been assigned and given instructions by fax or email on how to administer the test.

### STEP 5. *Make test appointment with Proctor*

The proctor and candidate agree on test date and time that is mutually convenient once the Proctor has received WPT access information and test assignment. If you or your WPT have any questions regarding WPT, please contact us at [testing@languagetesting.com](mailto:testing@languagetesting.com) or call 800-486-8444 ext. 10.

## NOTIFICATION WPT TEST RESULTS

Results of ACTFL proficiency assessments are communicated to the test candidate through the printing and mailing of ACTFL Proficiency Certificates, two weeks after the date of the test. (Each certificate, OPI and WPT, will come in separate mailings). The Virginia Department of Education will receive the candidate's test results via an electronic report. Please include a copy of your ACTFL Proficiency Certificates when submitting your credentials to the Virginia Department of Education. Each test becomes a permanent record in the ACTFL Test Archive. Official copies of the certificate may be requested at any time by submitting the Request for Official Copy of an ACTFL Rating Certificate with a payment of \$10.00 per copy.

## **PREPARING FOR AN OPI OR WPT**

To prepare, make opportunities to speak the target language, making sure to tell stories (in as much detail as possible) about personal and professional experiences that have happened, are happening and will happen. Do the same thing in writing by writing essays about personal and professional experiences that have happened, are happening and will happen, making sure to give much background information as well as details of the experience.

## **TEST TIPS**

When taking the oral proficiency interview, listen carefully to the questions asked by the interviewer before answering.

When answering, give as detailed a response as possible. Saying little to avoid making mistakes will not improve your rating. If you do not know a specific term in the target language, describe it and try not resort to English or making up words. (If you do use English or slang term, do not be surprised if the interviewer asks you to describe what that word means in the target language.)

When taking the writing test, read the directions for each of the four prompts carefully. Make sure that your written response addresses the tasks and specifications outlined in the prompt. For example, if the prompt asks you describe a specific work experience you have had, be sure to recount the details of a specific work experience and not just give a general description of your work experience. It is also very important that you follow the time allocation specified for each prompt. If a prompt asks you to give a brief description of a paragraph in length that should not take more than ten minutes to write, do not respond to that prompt by writing five paragraphs and taking twenty-five minutes. If you do this, you will not have enough time to address later prompts fully.

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